



Saint Paul Planning Commission

City Hall Conference Center Room 40
15 Kellogg Boulevard West

Steering Committee Meeting – 8:00 .m, Room 41

Christopher B. Coleman,
Mayor

Agenda

September 30, 2011
8:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Saint Paul
Planning Commission

Chair

Jon Commers

First Vice Chair

Barbara A. Wencil

Second Vice Chair

Paula Merrigan

Secretary

Anthony Fernandez

I. Approval of minutes of September 16, 2011

II. Chair's Announcements

III. Planning Director's Announcements

IV. Zoning Committee

SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications. *(Tom Beach, 651/266-9086)*

NO BUSINESS

V. Comprehensive Planning Committee

VI. Neighborhood Planning Committee

VII. Transportation Committee

Red Rock Lower Afton Station Area Plan - Approve resolution recommending adoption by the Mayor and City Council. *(Christina Morrison, 651-266-6546)*

VIII. Form-Based Coding for the Ford Site – Presentation by J. Michael Orange, MPCA Retiree Environmental Technical Program (RETAP), and Peter Musty, Peter Musty, LLC.

IX. Communications Committee

X. Task Force Reports

XI. Old Business

XII. New Business

XIII. Adjournment

Information on agenda items being considered by the Planning Commission and its committees can be found at www.stpaul.gov/ped, click on Planning.

Planning Commission Members: PLEASE call Sonja Butler, 651/266-6573, if unable to attend.

Pat Connolly
Gene Gelgelu
Bree Halverson
Richard Kramer
Gaius Nelson
Christopher Ochs
Trevor Oliver
Julie Perrus
Marilyn Porter
Elizabeth Reveal
Anthony Schertler
Robert Spaulding
Terri Thao
Jun-Li Wang
Daniel Ward II
David Wickiser
Roxanne Young

Planning Director
Donna Drummond

**Saint Paul Planning Commission &
Heritage Preservation Commission
MASTER MEETING CALENDAR**

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 26-30, 2011

Mon (26)

Tues (27)

4:00-5:30 p.m. Comprehensive Planning Committee
(Penelope Simison, 651/266-6554)

13th Floor – CHA
25 Fourth Street West

Industrial Zoning Study – Discussion of preliminary staff recommendations. No action.

Weds (28)

Thurs (29)

Fri (30)

8:00 a.m. Planning Commission Steering Committee
(Donna Drummond, 651/266-6556)

Room 41 City Hall
Conference Center
15 Kellogg Blvd.

8:30-11:00 a.m. Planning Commission Meeting
(Donna Drummond, 651/266-6556)

Room 40 City Hall
Conference Center
15 Kellogg Blvd.

Zoning..... SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications. *(Tom Beach, 651/266-9086)*

NO BUSINESS

Transportation Committee..... Red Rock Lower Afton Station Area Plan - Approve resolution recommending adoption by the Mayor and City Council. *(Christina Morrison, 651-266-6546)*

Informational Presentation..... Form-Based Coding for the Ford Site – Presentation by J. Michael Orange, MPCA Retiree Environmental Technical Program (RETAP), and Peter Musty, Peter Musty, LLC.

**Saint Paul Planning Commission
City Hall Conference Center
15 Kellogg Boulevard West**

Minutes September 16, 2011

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, September 16, 2011, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

Commissioners Present: Mmes. Halverson, Merrigan, Perrus, Reveal, Thao, Wencil; and Messrs. Commers, Connolly, Fernandez, Gelgelu, Kramer, Nelson, Ochs, Oliver, Schertler, Spaulding, Ward, and Wickiser.

Commissioners Absent: Mmes. *Porter, *Wang, and *Young.
*Excused

Also Present: Allan Torstenson, Lucy Thompson, Kate Reilly, Sarah Zorn, Ryan Kelley, Merritt Clapp-Smith, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes September 2, 2011.

MOTION: *Commissioner Ward moved approval of the minutes of September 2, 2011. Commissioner Merrigan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

II. Chair's Announcements

Chair Commers noted that the track for what will become the LRT Green Line on University Avenue was moved west to the city limits at Emerald Street the previous night.

He announced that over the next month or so he will be part of a group working with the Riverfront Development Corporation to consider creation of a Saint Paul Urban Design Festival, and will keep the Planning Commission posted.

III. Planning Director's Announcements

Allan Torstenson, Principal City Planner filling in for the Planning Director, announced that the District 9 Commercial Zoning Study and the District 9 Residential Zoning Study were both given final approval by the City Council.

IV. Zoning Committee

SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications. *(Tom Beach, 651/266-9086)*

One item came before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, September 13, 2011:

Mississippi Market Parking Lot, 622 Selby, expansion of parking lot onto 633 Hague lot (related to proposed house demolition and rezoning of 633 Hague).

Four items to come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, September 20, 2011:

- Rick Thorn office/apartments mixed use building, 1440 Roblyn Avenue;
- PPL 44 unit apartment building revised site plan, 2236 West 7th Street;
- Furness Parkway trail extension, new trail from Larpenteur to Hoyt and Ivy to Maryland; and
- Ordway Center expansion preliminary review, 345 Washington Street.

NEW BUSINESS

#11-264-892 Audrey and John Malone – Reestablishment of nonconforming use as a one-family home. 1517 Randolph Avenue, NE corner at Saratoga. (Sarah Zorn, 651/266-6570)

Commissioner Kramer said that the house is nonconforming in the B1 business district, has been vacant for a period of time, and has lost its legal-nonconforming status. The nonconforming use permit is to allow reuse of the house as a single family home.

MOTION: *Commissioner Kramer moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the reestablishment of legal nonconforming use. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

#11-265-812 Mississippi Market (Selby Ave) – Rezoning from RM2 Medium Density Multiple-Family Residential to B2 Community Business. 633 Hague Ave., between Dale and St. Albans. (Kate Reilly, 651/266-6618)

Commissioner Kramer reported that this rezoning is to provide for expanded parking for Mississippi Market.

MOTION: *Commissioner Kramer moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the rezoning. The motion carried with 17 in favor and 1 abstention (Spaulding) on a voice vote.*

Commissioner Kramer announced that the next scheduled Zoning Committee meeting on Thursday, September 22, 2011, has been cancelled.

V. Comprehensive Planning Committee

Industrial Zoning Study – Approve resolution recommending the initiation of a zoning study. (Penelope Simison, 651/266-6554)

Commission Merrigan said that they had met on Tuesday and discussed the initiation of an Industrial Zoning Study. The short resolution was not included in the commissioner's packets, so Commissioner Merrigan read the resolution and reported that the Comprehensive Planning Committee unanimously recommends initiation of the study.

MOTION: *Commissioner Merrigan moved the Comprehensive Planning Committee's recommendation to approve the resolution initiating an industrial zoning study. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

Commissioner Merrigan announced that the next meeting is on Tuesday, September 27, 2011.

VI. Neighborhood Planning Committee

Shepard Davern Residential Redevelopment Overlay District Amendment – Approve resolution recommending adoption by the Mayor and City Council. (*Patricia James, 651/266-6639*)

Commissioner Wencil reported that the City Council has introduced an ordinance to reduce the minimum site size in the Shepard Davern residential redevelopment overlay district from 2 acres to 1 acre, consistent with the Shepard Davern commercial redevelopment overlay district, and referred it to the Planning Commission for review and recommendation. She explained the committee's finding that the proposed 1 acre site size would be consistent with the Shepard Davern Gateway Area Plan, an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan and recommendation to delete the requirement entirely rather than just reducing it.

Chair Commers noted that the City Council will be holding a public hearing on the proposed amendment.

MOTION: *Commissioner Wencil moved the Neighborhood Planning Committee's recommendation to approve the resolution finding that the proposed Shepard Davern Residential Redevelopment Overlay District amendment reducing the minimum site size would be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and recommending deleting the requirement entirely rather than just reducing it. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

Solar Energy Systems Zoning Text Amendments - Approve resolution recommending adoption by the Mayor and City Council. (*Kate Reilly, 651/266-6618, and Allan Torstenson, 651/266-6579*).

Commissioner Wencil said that the resolution was not in their packets, but it is in front of them today.

MOTION: *Commissioner Wencil moved the Neighborhood Planning Committee's recommendation to approve the resolution that the Solar Energy Systems Zoning Text Amendments be adopted by the Mayor and City Council. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

Commissioner Wencil announced the items on the agenda for the next Neighborhood Committee meeting on Wednesday, September 21, 2011.

VII. Introduction to Form-Based Coding – Presentation by Bob Kost, Director of Planning & Design, SEH Inc., and Lucy Thompson, Principal City Planner.

Chair Commers made introductory comments about form-based coding as a different strategy for land use and urban design regulation, an alternative to Euclidean zoning that Saint Paul and most

cities use. The reason for this presentation is to become more literate and begin a discussion about form-based coding.

Lucy Thompson, PED staff, explained that Euclidean Zoning is separates use by district, originally developed mostly as a tool to separate noxious industrial uses from residential areas. Saint Paul adopted its first zoning code in 1922. It has evolved and adapted to address changing needs and issues over time, seeking quality while maintaining flexibility. Our Traditional Neighborhood Districts were adopted in 2004, with more flexibility for mixed-use development, design standards, and a stronger focus on form and design. Now we are looking at ways to further integrate land use with sustainability, infrastructure and the public realm, and form-based coding is a tool to consider.

Bob Kost, Director of Planning and Urban Design at SEH, said form-based coding is a type of development regulation intended to create a predictable public realm through the physical definition of urban form. Form-based codes address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets, blocks and open space. They are more about form, and less about use and density. They are not about architectural style.

Form-based codes commonly include elements or sections on administration, a regulating plan, building form standards, street and public space standards, and definitions. They are based on components of time-tested urbanism: walkable, non-auto dominated, human scaled, classically proportioned buildings, well defined and articulated public realm, vertically and horizontally integrated mix of uses, and interconnected green spaces of varied size and purpose.

Form-based codes are typically developed using a participatory charrette process to create a community vision and master plan with supportive elements necessary to implement the vision. Form-based codes are typically done for a specific site and address determinants of community form, block and lot size, solar orientation, streets, design and placement of building, building type, use, on- and off street parking, parks and open space, landscaping, screening ecological restoration and signs. A number of these elements are addressed in the City's current code, but are spread out across zoning, site plan review, subdivision ordinance, sign code, etc. Form-based codes are more descriptive and specific than Euclidian zoning. Utilizing diagrams, photos, tables and text keyed to a specific regulating plan that designates the appropriate typology, form and scale of buildings, streets and open spaces, and character of development.

There are different types of form-based codes:

- Frontage type, focusing on the public space, well suited for corridors and districts.
- Building type, focusing more on building typologies and street typologies, well suited for sub-districts and individual sites.
- The "Smart Code" based on "transects" that transition from natural areas (T1) to the urban core (T6). The transects provide for a context-based approach to apply character regulations across whole communities and neighborhoods.

Mr. Kost presented an example of form-based coding he worked on in Casper, Wyoming, with a vision to create a walkable neighborhood, respecting the area's history, offering a variety of uses such as shops, restaurants, offices, hotels, choices of housing types and prices, parks, trails, and

schools within a safe and attractive environment. The Casper form-based code is place-based, reflecting context and transect geography, with a typological approach to buildings and streets. It emphasizes form over use, is graphically fun and easy to use.

Lucy Thompson, PED staff, said they are not exploring form-based coding with a preconceived notion that it should be used in Saint Paul, but are looking at it with some key goals:

- Quality development while maintaining flexibility;
- Match zoning and regulatory tools with development opportunities; and
- Integrate land use with building form, the public realm, and sustainability.

Merritt Clapp-Smith, PED staff, discussed studies of the Ford site since the five-scenarios were developed, the most recent being a study of how to achieve sustainability goals on the site. Consultants suggested looking at form-based coding as a potential tool. She explained that they have little experience with form-based codes and don't know if it would be the right tool.

There will be additional presentations on form-based coding at the next Planning Commission meeting. Michael Orange, a retired planner for the City of Minneapolis, will discuss potential tools in Saint Paul's existing zoning regulations and form-based coding to achieve sustainability goals. Peter Musty, one of the consultants on the Ford sustainability study, will give his perspective on why he thinks form-based coding might be an appropriate tool to achieve sustainability goals for the Ford site. Ms. Clapp-Smith said they have submitted an application to Metropolitan Council for a Livable Communities Development grant for a zoning evaluation for the Ford site. They will know in January if they get the grant.

Commissioner Reveal asked about cities using form-based coding next to conventional zoning.

Mr. Kost said that is the most common application of a form-based coding. Most cities that use form-based coding embed it in their conventional zoning ordinance. City-wide form-based codes are less common.

Commissioner Reveal asked about the process to do that.

Mr. Kost said it would be the same process as for a creating a planned unit development or to do any change to the zoning code.

Ms. Thompson noted that the Capital Area, which has its own zoning authority, adopted a frontage type form-based code when they recently updated their zoning code.

Commissioner Ward asked about examples of cities like Saint Paul that have adopted and implemented form-based coding and have a track record to show the difference before and after form-based coding, and how the community has accepted it.

Mr. Kost said he doesn't have that at hand but can get it. Form-based coding has been used in Albuquerque, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York. The largest form-based code effort in the country was a complete rewrite of the Miami zoning code using form-based coding for the entire city. Ms. Thompson added that there is a Form-Base Code Institute that can be googled for information, and form-based codes from various cities can be downloaded.

Commissioner Oliver asked about administration of form-based codes, Smart Codes under which almost everything is administratively approved, and how it works in Casper.

Mr. Kost said generally the idea is to try to get as many things figured out and set up for administrative approval as possible to streamline development. In Casper, only major changes to the plan need to go to the Planning Commission or City Council.

Commissioner Merrigan commented that as an architect she is a bit leery of form-based coding. Architecture is a tool, not an end, and we need to look beyond “style and statement.” Form-based coding has many positives: addressing relationships in urban form, relationships between buildings, streets, and public spaces. It can provide for predictable urban form, but predictability can be negative as well as positive. We need to be careful to avoid a code that is too prescriptive, with too many pre-determined drawings included in the code that leave us to decorate boxes whether they are on tree-lined Summit Avenue or bustling University Avenue, pictures that are interchangeable in Denver, Houston or Miami and harken back to a nostalgic Disneyfied middle class main street that may or may not have ever existed. Such a form may not take into account or reflect the evolution of new and diverse communities and needs. Overly prescriptive form-based coding may not have allowed new building forms and development that helped create some of the midwest’s most magnificent urban places.

Ms. Thompson recalled that an early draft of the traditional neighborhood regulations had drawings to illustrate massing and relationships between buildings and streets that tended to cause confusion, with people asking if it has to look exactly like that. There were also issues with the code service the city uses in getting drawings into the code.

Commissioner Ochs said he looks forward to exploring form-based coding and thinking about it with respect to places like Lowertown.

VIII. Transportation Committee

Commissioner Spaulding announced the items on the agenda for the next Transportation Committee meeting on Monday, September 19, 2011.

IX. Communications Committee

Commissioner Thao had no report.

X. Task Force Reports

Commissioner Oliver reported on the Near East Side Task Force meeting and a subcommittee study of commercial buildings in the area. Their next meeting is on Tuesday, October 11, 2011. An open house for review of their ideas and a branding initiative is planned for Wednesday, October 5, 2011, at the Dayton’s Bluff Community Council Office.

XI. Old Business

None

XII. New Business

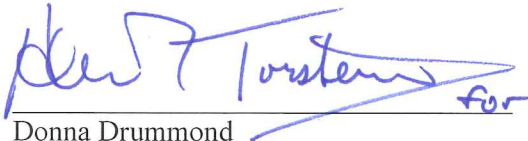
None

XIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Recorded and prepared by
Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary
Planning and Economic Development Department,
City of Saint Paul

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Donna Drummond", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right. The word "for" is written in small blue ink at the end of the flourish.

Donna Drummond
Planning Director

Approved _____
(Date)

Anthony Fernandez
Secretary of the Planning Commission



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

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Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1806

Telephone: 651-266-8989
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Web: www.stpaul.gov/dsi

SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY Sept 27, 2011
2nd Floor Conference Room
375 Jackson Street, Suite 218

<u>Time</u>	<u>Project Name and Location</u>
9:30	Summit Hill Assisted Living Conversion of hotel to 118 unit assisted living 1870 Old Hudson Road
10:00	Central Corridor Parking Lot Improvements to existing lot 676 University Ave W.
10:30	Barole Trucking Bldg New Office Warehouse Building 2286 Capp Road
11:15	Subway Parking Lot Grading and improvements 2119 University Ave

To Applicants:

You should plan to attend this meeting.

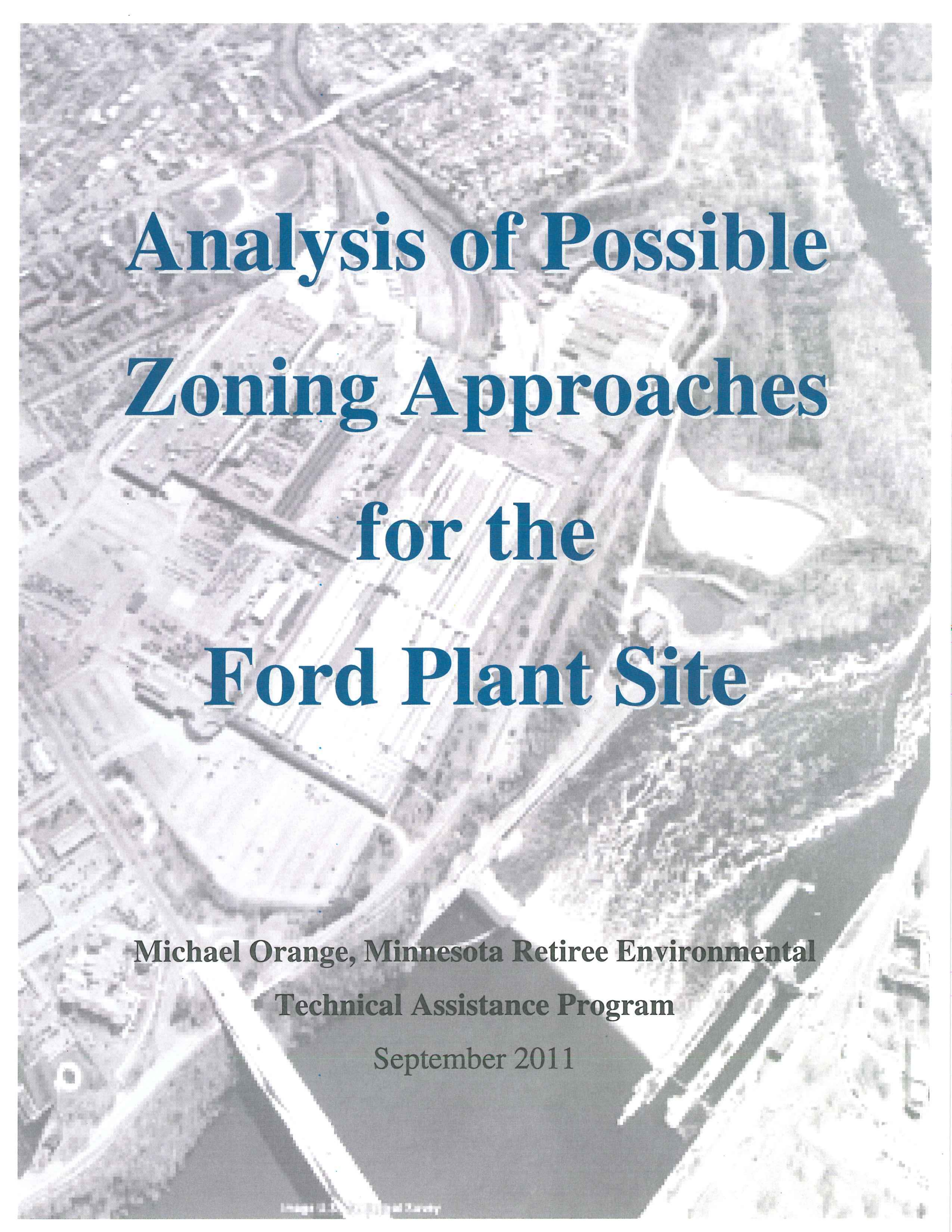
At this meeting you will have a chance to discuss the site plan for your project with Saint Paul's Site Plan Review Committee. The Committee is made up of City staff from Zoning, Traffic, Sewers, Water, Public Works, Fire, and Parks. You are encouraged to bring your engineer, architect, or contractor with you to handle any technical questions raised by city staff. The purpose of this meeting is to simplify the review process by letting the applicant meet with staff from a number of departments at one time. Staff will make comments and ask questions based on their review of the plans. By the end of the meeting you will know if the site plan can be approved as submitted or if revisions will be required. Staff will take minutes at the meeting and send you a copy.

Parking

Parking is available at on-street meters. Some off-street parking spaces are available in our visitor parking lot off of 6th Street at Jackson.

To see a map of additional nearby parking ramps go to
<http://www.ci.stpaul.mn.us/depts/dsi/liep/info/location.html>

If you have any questions, please call Mary Montgomery at 651-266-9088 or
mary.montgomery@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

An aerial photograph of the Ford Plant Site, showing a large industrial complex with several large buildings and parking lots. The site is surrounded by a mix of residential and commercial areas, with roads and green spaces visible. The text is overlaid on the image in a large, bold, blue serif font.

Analysis of Possible Zoning Approaches for the Ford Plant Site

**Michael Orange, Minnesota Retiree Environmental
Technical Assistance Program**

September 2011

Analysis of Possible Zoning Approaches for the Ford Plant Site

Michael Orange, Minnesota Retiree Environmental Technical Assistance Program

September 2011

1.0. Assignment

The City of Saint Paul (City) contracted with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Retiree Environmental Technical Assistance Program (RETAP) to complete an analysis of the most appropriate zoning method to ensure sustainable redevelopment of the Ford Plant site. RETAP consultant, Michael Orange (Consultant), was assigned the project.

The findings, conclusions, and recommendations contained herein are those of the RETAP Consultant and do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, other State agencies, or the City of Saint Paul.

The contract for the project included the following expectations for the Consultant:

- *Researching various zoning code and programmatic approaches for implementing sustainability on large sites, including form-based codes, LEED-ND, and overlay districts, and then comparing the elements they address with the elements of sustainability desired for implementation as identified in the report, Roadmap to Sustainability for the Saint Paul Ford Site (hereinafter "The Roadmap").*
- *Preparing a report that clearly characterizes the different approaches analyzed, their ability to provide a strong implementation mechanism for The Roadmap agenda, and recommendations on what type of programmatic or zoning approach the City of Saint Paul should pursue to achieve its sustainability goals for the Ford site.*
- *Follow-up meeting with interested staff and officials from the City of Saint Paul to present results of the assessment and recommendations.*

The purpose of the assessment is to better understand what type of zoning code approach may be the best mechanism for implementing the sustainability agenda and thresholds identified in The Roadmap. Upon completion of this assessment, you will be provided a report containing recommendations on which types of zoning are more or less appropriate for implementing sustainability at the Saint Paul Ford site as identified in The Roadmap.

2.0. Information Reviewed

The Consultant reviewed the *Roadmap to Sustainability, Saint Paul Ford Site (The Roadmap)* report and researched the following other reports and websites:

- City of Saint Paul Ford project, website
- Form-Based Codes Institute, website
- Center for Applied Transect Studies, website
- One Planet Communities, website
- SmartCode Central, website and the SmartCode plus the following modules:¹
 - Sustainable Urbanism, Performance-Based SmartCode Module
 - Transit-Oriented Development SmartCode Module
 - Landscape SmartCode Module
- Examples of form-based codes:
 - The Midtown Miami Special District in the city's Zoning Code, <http://www.miami21.org/PDFs/FinalDocumentsMay2010/AppendixC-MidtownOverlayDistrict-May2010.pdf>).
 - *Heart of Peoria Form Districts*, <http://www.ci.peoria.il.us/development-codes> and <http://www.formbasedcodes.org/samplecodes?search=&tid%5B%5D=33>).
 - *Old Yellowstone District and South Poplar Street Form Based Code*, prepared for the City of Casper, Wyoming by SEH, September 2007, [http://www.casperwy.gov/Portals/0/docs/Old%20Yellowstone%20District/FormBasedCode\(compressed\).pdf](http://www.casperwy.gov/Portals/0/docs/Old%20Yellowstone%20District/FormBasedCode(compressed).pdf)
 - *City of Benicia, Downtown Mixed Use Master Plan*, September 2007, http://www.ci.benicia.ca.us/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={D87C20DD-AE9B-41D5-84A7-D29CAD93E9F3}
- Sustainable Urbanism Performance-Based SmartCode Module, code template
- An Introduction to Sustainable Form-Based Codes, article
- Hybrid codes versus form-based codes, article
- LEED-ND and Minnesota Sustainable Buildings 2030 (<http://www.mn2030.umn.edu/>)
- St. Paul Zoning Code, Title VIII of the City's Code of Ordinances <http://library.municode.com/index.aspx?clientID=10061&stateID=23&statename=Minnesota>

3.0. Assumptions

Consultant's report assumes the following:

- **Small area plan based on *The Roadmap*:** The City will adopt² a small area plan, called for the purposes of this report, the Ford Site Small Area Plan (Small Area Plan). The Small Area Plan will define the public infrastructure and appropriate land uses for the project site consistent with *The Roadmap*. If the City opts to create a SmartCode for the project site, the land use designations in the Small Area Plan will be consistent with SmartCode terminology. If the City relies on its zoning code, the land use designations in the Small Area Plan will be consistent with current designations in the code such as the

¹ Refer to <http://www.transect.org/modules.html>

² An option is to also adopt the small area plan as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan, which would also involve review and approval of the change by the Metropolitan Council.

Traditional Neighborhood District³ and the industrial districts, or consistent with a new district that may be created specifically for the project site. The City could also incorporate and adopt *The Roadmap* by reference in the Small Area Plan.

- **40-Acre Rezoning Study:** The City will conduct a 40-Acre Rezoning Study to implement the recommended rezoning for the site consistent with the adopted Small Area Plan.
- **Overlay district approach:** This approach assumes that the City will create a new overlay district, called for the purposes of this study the Ford Site Overlay District (Overlay District) and rezone the project site using existing zoning districts. The most likely underlying zoning would include the Traditional Neighborhood Districts (for residential and commercial uses) and the industrial districts (for manufacturing and industrial uses).
- **Ford Site Performance Standards:** The City will implement most of *The Roadmap*'s recommendations via the adoption of performance standards specific for the Overlay District, called for the purposes of this report, the Ford Site Performance Standards.
- **SmartCode approach:** This approach assumes that the City will implement the Small Area Plan via the adaption of the SmartCode, which is the most developed form-based code currently used.⁴ The Overlay District described above would incorporate SmartCode principles. Land use would be defined more by the types of thoroughfares mapped for the project site.

4.0. Findings

4.1. Both Alternatives are Feasible

There are several form-based codes already in place, including variations on the SmartCode, that could serve as models for the City to adapt for the project site (refer to Section 4.4). A form-based code approach, used in tandem with the Small Area Plan, could help the City implement *The Roadmap*'s recommendations. The same is true for the other alternative, amending the current Zoning Code. The issue becomes finding the better method for this case.

4.2. *The Roadmap* Recommended Use of a Form-Based Code

The following is an excerpt from *The Roadmap* report (pp. 45-46, emphasis added):

³ The Traditional Neighborhood, TN3 District requires the development of a master plan for developments greater than 15 acres. TN3 areas covered by such a master plan are designated as TN3 (M).

⁴ Comments regarding SmartCode apply to form-based codes in general.

The City's zoning code and use designations serve the needs of the City for the most part, however, *the traditional zoning approach may both over-regulate uses and under-serve the design and performance opportunities* for a redeveloped Ford site. The *sustainability performance standards outlined in this report will be minimally advanced by the City's current zoning approach and may in parts be impeded by it*. For example, this report encourages flexibility in building and space use over time, to enable the site to adjust to the desires of the community and needs of the marketplace in order to remain vibrant. Use based zoning designations, successful in separating uses, is less successful as a tool for the implementation and regulation of more *mixed use, sophisticated, walkable urban patterns*. *Market flexibility is also reduced* with use based zoning, as it often requires regulatory approval for even slight changes in use. Current zoning does not regulate operations such as site-wide walkability, site-wide wastewater, recycling or on-site energy generation, all of which are recommended in this report.

In order to achieve the range of performance thresholds for sustainable redevelopment in this report, a different type of zoning approach for the site may be necessary.

Form Based Regulation: The Ford Site Sustainable Redevelopment team identified *flexible land and building use over time as a key goal* for the site. To remain vibrant and successful, a neighborhood must be able to adapt to the changing needs and desires of its residents and visitors. Often times this means changing the way a building or space is used, which may be prohibited under traditional, single-use zoning. The team recommends that the sustainability thresholds set for the site be achieved through design, while use is allowed to be somewhat fluid through the support of a form-based code.

4.3. SmartCode Advantages

Compared to traditional codes, the strength of the SmartCode is its simplicity, graphical clarity, understandability, and ease of implementation. In addition, the approval process can be handled more on an administrative basis that requires fewer public hearings (and less citizen input), and actions by the planning commission and city council (which can result in a lessened administrative burden). Another important advantage is that the SmartCode can be more flexible and allow changes of building uses over time as markets change.

The SmartCode begins with a definition of types of thoroughfares and includes a regulating plan that maps them. Most development regulations (e.g. allowable uses, build-to-lines, streetscape, landscaping, on-street parking, etc.) are keyed to the type of thoroughfare mapped on the regulating plan. Theoretically, St. Paul could adopt the SmartCode and a regulating plan that defines the specific thoroughfares and let the

SmartCode graphics-oriented standards do the rest. As described in more detail below, this approach will work to implement some of *The Roadmap*'s recommendations, but not the majority.

The following excerpts from "An Introduction to Form-Based Codes," by Steve Coyle and Figure 1 provide a useful comparison of form-based codes to traditional zoning:

Form-based codes are land development regulations that emphasize the desired physical form—the design, scale, and relationships—of buildings and public space and less on land uses. Form-based codes regulate land, infrastructure, and building development consistent with general or comprehensive plans. They seek to achieve a specific urban form and to shape a higher quality built environment that integrates rather than separates compatible uses. As a supplement, modification, or replacement to city or county zoning and development ordinances, form-based codes help create a predictable public and private realm by controlling or regulating its physical form as well as the building intensities. ...

In place of controlling building densities through formulas such as floor-area-ratios, dwelling units per acre and parking formulas, form-based codes may control densities by regulating the total permitted buildable volume of space determined, for example, by the total number of floors allowed instead of maximum building heights. Other differences include using build-to lines or set-back averaging instead of minimum setbacks, and maximum parking ratios and shared parking tables in place of minimum ratios. Similarities include the designation of special-use districts and maximum units per acre.

Figure 1: Comparison of Conventional and Form-Based Codes

Conventional		Form-Based
	Single-Use zoning legalizes separated, non-integrated places, and decreases walkability	
	F.A.R. - dominated, single use codes incentivize drive-to big boxes and parking lots - commercial sprawl	
	Focusing on use instead of form creates unsustainable subdivision pods	
	Conventional coding by zoning map and text results in "cookie cutter" places	
	Coding for the car produces a car-oriented environment like the strip center	

4.4. Review of Existing Form-Based Codes

The Consultant searched for cities with similar characteristics to St. Paul that have adopted a form-based code. The following summarizes four codes reviewed: Miami, Florida; Peoria, Illinois; Casper, Wyoming; and Benicia, California. In the case of Miami and Peoria, the resulting codes appear to be hybrids of the SmartCode (which is oriented to graphics keyed to type of thoroughfare) and text-dominated traditional codes. For example, Miami's form-based code lists the standards that regulate building height, use, build-to lines, etc. on tables that are organized by sections of individual streets rather than by traditional zoning districts. The City of Peoria's form-based code applies only to specific districts and it uses regulating maps to define allowable uses, heights, access, and other standards for property with street frontages within each district. The maps also define build-to lines and parking setbacks. Although both of these codes use graphics to illustrate the requirements, which is similar to the graphics-dominated SmartCode, they both still need an extensive amount of text in support of their tables and maps. This makes both of them hybrid type codes (as described in the article referenced above, "Hybrid codes versus form-based codes").

The City of Casper, Wyoming adopted a form-based code in 2007 for a 150-acre portion of the city. Since the street grid was already in place, it focuses on zones, not thoroughfares as the SmartCode does. The Casper code includes a regulating plan with five zones, the first three of which define allowable building types for mixed uses (commercial, residential, and civic buildings) with descending degrees of intensity. Zone 4 allows residential and home occupations, and Zone 5 is reserved for public recreational uses primarily adjacent the city's river. Even though its graphics-dominated regulations are keyed to zones instead of thoroughfares, it closely resembles the SmartCode and is not a hybrid.

In 2007, the City of Benicia, California adopted a form-based code to implement the city's downtown mixed-use master plan. It encompasses about 88 acres in the Downtown Historic District. Similar to the case in Casper, the street grid is already in place so the code focuses on zones, not thoroughfare delineations. Also like Casper's, it includes a regulating plan with four zones that allow mixed use in descending order of intensity and a fifth zone for "public and semi-public" uses. The most intense zone, the Town Core Zone, includes virtually all of the lots fronting on First Street, the city's commercial core street. Graphics-oriented standards define allowable uses and construction parameters along this thoroughfare. Most of the lots that front on side streets that intersect First Street are in the next intense zone, the Town Core-Open Zone. This zone transitions to the residential-oriented Neighborhood General Zone, which restricts uses to residential and home occupations.

The Casper code and especially the Benicia code best fit the model of the SmartCode—they are not hybrid codes, and they offer clear examples of how this approach might work for the project site. Before deciding whether to adapt a form-based code, St. Paul staff

may want to query their colleagues in these two cities about how well the codes have worked since their adoption in 2007.

4.5. SmartCode Advantages Not Applicable in this Case

While it is clear that the City could adapt the SmartCode for the project site, it is also clear that none of the advantages described above in Figure 1 are applicable in this case and that the SmartCode approach is silent on most of *The Roadmap's* recommendations, as the following demonstrates:

4.5.1. More complex administrative review: Rather than ease review, the addition of a SmartCode for the project site would make things more complex. In addition to the continued use of the current code, all the players in the development process would have to learn this new kind of zoning tool for on-site developments—staff, Planning Commission, City Council/Mayor, developers, neighborhood and business groups, etc. If the City is planning to use this as a test case with the long-term view of converting the entire code to a SmartCode or using the SmartCode in other areas of the City, then this is a good place to test it. If not, the question becomes, what can a SmartCode do that an amended code cannot? The benefits of using the SmartCode must outweigh the higher administrative burden of managing two zoning systems.

4.5.2. Implementing *The Roadmap's* recommendations and strategies: *The Roadmap* contains scores of recommendations and strategies. In order to implement them, the City should rely on two legal documents:

- **Ford Site Performance Standards:** The most fundamental recommendations (and perhaps most important) should be incorporated in Chapter 63 of the zoning code in a new set of unique performance standards that will apply to the project site, the Ford Site Performance Standards. Examples of this kind of recommendation include all of the Minimum Performance Standards in Section 6.0 Stormwater Management and Section 7.0 Soils and the following from Section 2.0, Transportation & Public Realm Network:
 - 2.1 Provide mix of office, industrial, residential, and commercial uses on site that complement the existing mix of uses and services in the area.
 - 2.2 Minimum residential density (du/acre) greater than 20 du/acre (Density to be calculated using LEED-ND computational method outlined NPD Credit 2.).
 - 2.3 Minimum Non-Residential floor area ratio (FAR) greater than 1.50 (Non-Res. FAR to be calculated using LEED-ND computational method outlined NPD Credit 2).

Clearly, the City could legally approve or deny a proposed development based on whether or not it was consistent with these standards

- **Recommendations in Small Area Plan:** Other recommendations in *The Roadmap* apply to the site in general, apply to the public realm, or are not appropriate for inclusion in a zoning code. For example, Performance Standard 5.2 requires that household, commercial, and industrial solid waste leaving the entire project site must be half that of an average or typical development. Performance Standard 2.9 requires that 50% of all residential and non-residential building entries be within ¼ mile of a vehicle-sharing site or transit services. A project developer could not be held responsible for ensuring a business or transit operator provides these services near the individual project site.

These kinds of performance standards in *The Roadmap* can be included in the Small Area Plan (or *The Roadmap* can be adopted by reference as part of the Small Area Plan) and can *guide* the approval process for a proposed development. However, they cannot serve as a basis for approving or denying a zoning permit.

- 4.5.3. About the Ford Site Performance Standards:** Using the SmartCode offers no advantages for implementing the strategies and performance standards from *The Roadmap*. The City would have to create the unique Ford Site Performance Standards for the current code no matter which code approach it took. For example, the SmartCode indirectly addresses *The Roadmap's* call for maximizing building energy efficiency by steering development towards more sustainable building forms that include common walls and multi-story structures that will have lower energy consumption per square foot than comparable single-story, stand-alone structures. However, the City's current Traditional Neighborhood District already accomplishes these same objectives and the Ford Site Performance Standards could include *The Roadmap's* specific building energy efficiency goals.

The development of the Ford Site Performance Standards will address the concern in *The Roadmap* that the current code could “under-serve the design and performance opportunities.”

Currently, State law restricts local governments from using local ordinances to require new “of right” developments to exceed the state-adopted International Building Code, which, unfortunately, is now sorely outdated. Building efficiency technology has outstripped it to the point that energy efficiencies that are 50% better than this code are now possible with less than ten-year payback periods.

State law does not prohibit a municipality from requiring more rigid building efficiency for developments that require the city approval of a permit that is not a “permit of right.” Permitted uses, for example, are permits of right. In addition, the state preemption does not prevent a city from setting higher standards for developments that seek city resources (e.g. tax increment financing, grants, loan

guarantees, tax abatement, brownfield cleanup, condemnation, etc.).⁵ The City already has a green building policy for developments that require over \$200,000 in City funds.⁶

4.5.4. Form and use: Form-based codes are a valid response primarily to the traditional zoning codes that led to the development of formless suburban sprawl. This is not the case in St. Paul. The City has a state-of-the-art zoning code that incorporates all of the tools and flexibility necessary to guiding sustainable development. The City's Traditional Neighborhood (TN) District, which is the most likely zoning for the non-industrial areas of the site, incorporates virtually all of the form-based regulations described in the typical SmartCode. It addresses mixed use, building placement, minimum and maximum height, massing, facade articulation, building materials, lighting, entrances and fenestration, location of parking and vehicular access, etc. It also accommodates a very broad change of use over time (use flexibility), which is a desirable characteristic stressed in *The Roadmap* and one of the important advantages of the SmartCode.

The most likely category within the SmartCode that would apply to all but the Special Districts (see subsection 4.5.6. below) is the T-4 General Urban Zone: This zone consists of a "mixed use but primarily residential urban fabric. It may have a wide range of building types: single, sideyard, and rowhouses. Setbacks and landscaping are variable. Streets with curbs and sidewalks define medium-sized blocks."⁷ While the focus is on form, the SmartCode does necessarily restrict uses too. Table 12-Specific Functions and Uses provides a range of permitted uses in the T-4 District including a variety of residential types (single-family, duplex, apartments, live-work units, accessory units, inns and B & Bs, school dormitories), commercial uses (offices, retail, and restaurants), religious assemblies, funeral homes, medical clinics, libraries, schools, and child care facilities. Table 66.321 in the current code lists allowable uses in the Traditional Neighborhood Districts. The TN3 District allows the mixing of all of the uses listed in the SmartCode's Table 12 and also several uses that are not listed.⁸

⁵ Woodbury's planned unit development ordinance, for example, requires LEED design.

⁶ Saint Paul Green Building Policy: This policy, adopted in 2010, applies to all new construction projects receiving \$200,000 or more in City financing. The projects would be required to be certifiable or compliant under one of the following existing green building rating programs, including:

- LEED New Construction or Historic, Silver
- Green Globes, 2 globes
- State of Minnesota B3 Guidelines
- Saint Paul Port Authority Green Design
- Minnesota Green Star, Silver
- Green Communities, Minnesota

Overlay Projects are also required to meet a specific set of requirements related to predicted energy use, predicted water use, construction waste, environmental air quality, predicted greenhouse gas emissions, stormwater management and energy benchmarking.

⁷ *SmartCode Version 9.2*, p. xi.

⁸ The current code is more specific and broader than the SmartCode as regards allowable community residential facilities (foster homes, transitional housing, battered persons residences, sober houses, and boarding houses), and, unlike the

None of the negative characteristics listed on the left for traditional codes shown in the above in Figure 1 applies to St. Paul's code, and all of the positive characteristics on the right already do. Of course, there are still advantages, disadvantages, and gaps associated with both possible courses of action. For example, the City could modify the SmartCode to match its more flexible TN3 District. However, it would be much easier to amend the current code to implement *The Roadmap* than to add the very different SmartCode to address a minor gap.

While several of the recommendations in *The Roadmap* deal with the building form issues that encourage compact, walkable, transit-oriented, mixed-use neighborhoods where the SmartCode may offer advantages, the vast majority do not. They focus on making developments more sustainable in other ways and would be contained in the Ford Site Performance Standards, which would be required for *both* the SmartCode approach and the amended code approach. The City's current code already allows market flexibility for the "mixed use, sophisticated, walkable urban patterns" called for in *The Roadmap*.

4.5.5. Public infrastructure: *The Roadmap* correctly states that "Current zoning does not regulate operations such as site-wide walkability, site-wide wastewater, recycling or on-site energy generation, all of which are recommended in this report." These are excellent examples of the group of recommendations in *The Roadmap* that belong in the Ford Site Performance Standards or the Ford Site Small Area Plan, as described above. Unlike traditional zoning codes, the SmartCode does include specific standards for the public realm—types and scale of thoroughfares, lighting, pedestrian and bicycle access, landscaping, plazas, parks, etc. However, the City does not need the SmartCode to regulate these features as part of the private development process. It already has the authority to implement them through its capital improvement program consistent with adopted plans such as the Ford Site Small Area Plan.

4.5.6. Industrial and auto-oriented uses: The SmartCode is virtually silent as regards industrial and auto-oriented uses by relegating them to Special Districts, which the code leaves up to the city to design. While auto-oriented uses may not play a significant role within the project site, industrial uses certainly might. Use of the SmartCode would mean having to develop Special Districts to deal with these potential uses. On the other hand, the City's current code is already fully developed as regards all potential uses.

4.6. New Land Use District

Another option is for the City to create an entirely new zoning district and amend the zoning map by placing this new district over the entire project site. The goal would be to

SmartCode, it does not prohibit "liquor-selling establishments." However, the City is not bound by the current version of the SmartCode and could adapt it to meet its specific needs.

draft it to accommodate the uses called for in the Small Area Plan and permit the flexibility over time that is characteristic of the SmartCode approach. It would eliminate the need for an overlay district. However, this is not a feasible approach. The new district would have to be unnecessarily complex to accommodate the variety of desired uses and there is no need to do so since the code already has appropriate zoning districts that could be covered by an overlay district.

4.7. Table: Analysis of Possible Zoning Approaches to Implement *The Roadmap* to Sustainability, Saint Paul Ford Site

The Roadmap includes scores of minimum performance standards, ultimate performance standards, and implementation strategies for its 11 sections. The attached table combines and summarizes the Minimum Performance Standards into 25 standards and compares how the two zoning approaches could implement them. As stated above, both zoning approaches can implement the standards. Of the 25 summarized standards, the City would use the Small Area Plan to implement about 10 of them. The City would implement the majority of the recommendations through its adoption of the Ford Site Performance Standards for the Overlay District, which is the implementation tool needed for both zoning options. The SmartCode has the ability to implement two of these standards without the need for the Ford Site Performance Standards:

- Developments should include mixed use with minimum residential density of 20 DUs per acre and non-residential use with an FAR greater than 1.5.
- Street connectivity (including sidewalks and bike lanes) greater than surrounding neighborhoods or meet LEED-Neighborhood Development standards.

The SmartCode—including the Sustainable Urbanism, Transit-Oriented Development, and Landscape SmartCode modules—provides very helpful standards and illustrative graphics that would be very useful for the City’s crafting of the Ford Site Performance Standards for the Overlay District.

5.0. Conclusions

- **Both options are feasible:** As Table 1 shows, all of the minimum performance standards in *The Roadmap* can be implemented by either zoning approach. This is because *both* will require the adoption of the Small Area Plan and the Ford Site Performance Standards to implement most of *The Roadmap*’s standards.
- **SmartCode Advantages Not Applicable in this Case:** As *The Roadmap* points out, form-based codes offer significant advantages over many traditional zoning codes, especially those that have led to suburban sprawl. They can shape a higher quality built environment that integrates rather than separates compatible public and private uses and infrastructure, and they can be easier to administer than a complex traditional code. However, these advantages are not applicable for the implementation of *The Roadmap*’s recommendations. The City can use its state-of-the-art zoning code, especially its

Traditional Neighborhood District regulations, to shape development in the same direction as a form-based code and accommodate use flexibility over time.

There are advantages, disadvantages, and gaps associated with both possible courses of action. However, it may be easier to amend the City's current code to implement *The Roadmap* than to add the very different SmartCode to address the few minor gaps in it described above.

While a few of the recommendations in *The Roadmap* deal with the building form issues that encourage compact, walkable, transit-oriented, mixed-use neighborhoods where the SmartCode may offer advantages, the vast majority do not. They focus on making developments more sustainable in other ways and would be addressed in the Ford Site Performance Standards and the Ford Site Small Area Plan, both of which would be required for the SmartCode approach and the amended code approach recommended herein.

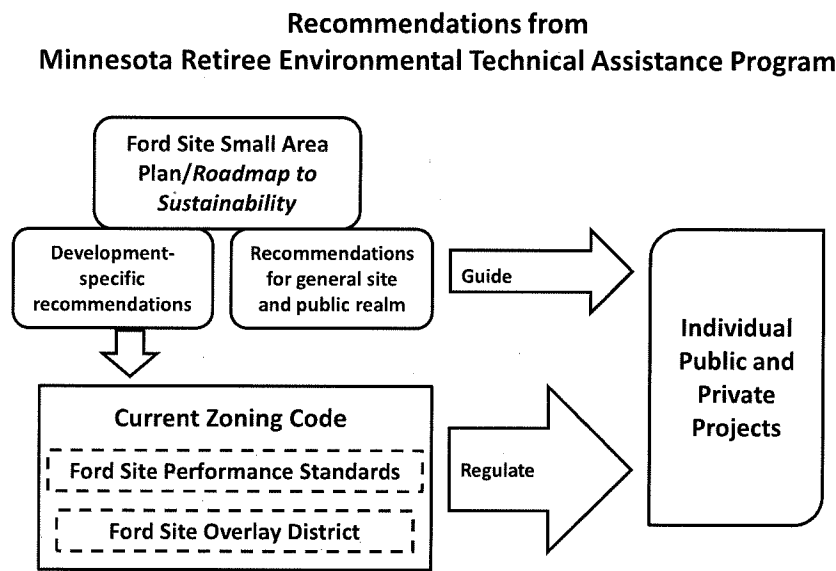
Unlike traditional zoning codes, the SmartCode also defines a significant portion of the public realm to be compatible with adjacent public and private developments. However, the City already has the authority to implement public projects through its capital improvement program consistent with adopted plans such as the Ford Site Small Area Plan.

- **More complex administrative review:** Rather than ease review, the addition of a SmartCode for the project site would make things more complex. In addition to the continued use of the current code, all the players in the development process would have to learn this new kind of zoning tool.
- **SmartCode ignores industrial land use:** Since the SmartCode virtually ignores industrial land uses, it is easier for the City to rely on its current industrial regulations than to create a form-based Special Industrial District to address this land use category called for in *The Roadmap*.
- **New district option not feasible:** The option of creating a new district specifically for the project site is not feasible. It would have to be unnecessarily complex to accommodate the variety of desired uses and there is no need to do so since the code already has appropriate zoning districts that could be covered by an overlay district.
- **SmartCode offers valuable information:** The SmartCode—including the Sustainable Urbanism, Transit-Oriented Development, and Landscape SmartCode modules—provides very helpful standards and illustrative graphics that would be very useful for the City's crafting of the Ford Site Performance Standards for the Overlay District.

6.0. Recommendation

Figure 2 illustrates the Consultant's recommendations. As a part of a 40-Acre Study process, the City should adopt a Ford Site Small Area Plan, incorporating the recommendations from *The Roadmap to Sustainability* report. Next, the City should adopt a text amendment to its zoning code that includes the creation of the Ford Site Performance Standards. These performance standards should include those recommendations from *The Roadmap* that apply to specific development projects. The text amendment should also include the creation of the Ford Site Overlay District. Finally, the City should adopt a zoning map change that defines the boundaries of the Overlay District. Recommendations from *The Roadmap* that apply to the entire site, address the public realm, or are not applicable to specific development projects should guide City decisions during the project review process for specific public and private projects.⁹

Figure 2: Graphic of Recommendation



Attachment:

Analysis of Possible Zoning Approaches to Implement *The Roadmap to Sustainability*, Saint Paul Ford Site

⁹ If the City were to instead use a form-based code, it would be incorporated within the bottom box "Ford Site Overlay District." None of the other boxes would change.

Transportation Committee Staff Report

Committee date: 9/19/11

Project Name	Red Rock Station Area Plan Public Hearing Comments
Geographic Scope	½ mile radius around the existing Lower Afton Park and Ride site (bounded by Point Douglas, Lower Afton, and Highway 61)
Ward(s)	7
District Council(s)	1
Project Description	Planning for proposed future Commuter Rail Station Area. The plan addresses multi-modal transportation access, market potential, platform location, and cultural, historical, and environmental context. Long-term plans include a low-profile 275-stall parking facility north of Lower Afton, and a ped bridge over Highway 61 to the rail platform. The plan also calls for restoring/enhancing green space, as well as connecting to local and regional trails and parks.
Project Contact	Christina Morrison, PED
Contact email/phone	Christina.morrison@ci.stpaul.mn.us , 651-266-6546
Lead Agency/Department	Washington County Public Works
Purpose of Project/Plan	Public purpose is to plan for improved transit in the corridor starting with expanded bus service and then eventually transitioning to commuter rail.
Planning References	Red Rock Commuter Rail Feasibility Study (2001), Red Rock Corridor AA (2007), MnDOT Commuter Rail System Plan (1999), Met Council TPP (2008), Red Rock Commuter Bus Feasibility Plan (2009), Comp Plan(2010)
Project stage	Post Alternative Analysis (AA) planning
General Timeline	Station Area Planning adopted by Fall 2011.
District Council position (if applicable)	Support
Level of Committee Involvement	Inform, advise & consent.
Previous Committee action	Introductory presentation on 1/24/11, presentation on the SAP on 7/11/11. Recommended plan for release for a public hearing.
Level of Public Involvement	Inform, advise & consent. Public Meetings held in August 2010, January 2011, and April 2011.
Public Hearing	September 2, 2011
Public Hearing Location	Planning Commission
Primary Funding Source(s)	Federal 5339 Funds, Local (WCRRA, DCRRA, RCRRA, CTIB grant)
Cost	\$1.15 Million for all station area plans & process

Staff recommendation	Recommend approval of the plan
Action item requested of the Committee	Recommend approval
Committee recommendation	Recommended approval of the plan
Committee vote	8-0



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

25 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Telephone: 651-266-6565
Facsimile: 651-228-3261

Date: September 20, 2011
To: Planning Commission
From: Transportation Committee
Subject: Review of public hearing comments on Lower Afton Station Area Plan

Background

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on Lower Afton Station Area Plan on September 2, 2011. No one testified. Staff received a letter from District 1, and an email from Joanne Katz, a resident of 497 Burlington Road. Both documents are attached. This memo summarizes the issues raised.

The public hearing draft of the plan is available online at bit.ly/redrockplan

Overview of public hearing comments

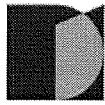
District 1 wrote in support of the plan's adoption.

Ms. Katz listed the following concerns regarding the siting of the station. Staff response is in italics.

1. Lower Afton Road and other neighborhood streets will not be able to accommodate park and ride traffic. *Consultants analyzed traffic changes with the cooperation of city, county, and state engineers. Moving the site to the north side of Lower Afton should benefit traffic flow on Lower Afton, enhance connections to the new Lower Afton trail, and provide safe pedestrian access. Enhanced local feeder buses would also help bring commuters to the site.*
2. Development pressure will follow the park and ride placement. *Due to major constraints on this site, the plan does not recommend any changes to land use or zoning through the year 2040. Additional development is not viable and not recommended here in the foreseeable future.*
3. The station should be moved south to Bailey Road or to the 94 corridor. *The station location was determined during the Alternative Analysis in 2007, and is outside the scope of this plan.*
4. A quarter-mile is too small of an area to see full impacts. *A half-mile radius was used as the planning area. Due to physical constraints like Battle Creek Park, the bluff, and Pigs Eye, any impacts are generally confined to a small area at Lower Afton and Highway 61.*

Committee Recommendation

The committee recommends approval of the Lower Afton Station Area Plan.



District 1

Community Council

2105 ½ Old Hudson Road, Saint Paul, MN 55119

www.district1council.org

district1council.blogspot.com

Community Council Office

Police Storefront

(651) 578-7600 (phone)

(651) 578-7400 (phone)

(651) 578-7404 (fax)

(651) 578-7404 (fax)

district1council@aol.com

district1CPC@aol.com

To: Saint Paul Planning Commission
2011

August 31,

From: District 1 Community Council

Re: Red Rock Station Area Planning

The District 1 Community Council sent its Executive Director as its representative to the Red Rock Corridor Station Area Planning Citizens Advisory Committee. Over the time the CAC was meeting, our organization assisted with gathering input from affected Saint Paul residents about the future Lower Afton station and kept them informed of the developing plan. Several community meetings were held, articles were published in our neighborhood paper and on our website, and discussions among residents took place in other, less formal settings. Although opinions about the project were not unanimous in the district, everyone recognized that the park and ride station has a strong impact on the community, and that its future design could affect a broader area of our district than a half-mile radius. The design you see in the draft plan is a result of integrating resident input with the unique character and limitations of the surrounding neighborhood. The design respects the Mississippi River Critical Area, our local small area and community plans, the regional parks, and the residential quality of the area around the station. It also increases amenities for residents as well as commuters and visitors to the regional park. We hope that it will also increase bus service as a feeder system to the park and ride is expanded.

The District 1 Community Council stands in strong and unified support of the resulting station area plan for Lower Afton.

Participation in the planning process has already yielded benefits to the immediate vicinity of the current park and ride lot. Residents were empowered, as a direct result of the station area planning, to address issues with potential expansion at the current site. Being able to envision a long-term plan has helped them to identify more immediate needs and to express solutions that will meet those needs.

The District 1 Community Council urges the Planning Commission to adopt this station area plan for the Lower Afton Park and Ride lot of the Red Rock Corridor.

From: <jomkatz@comcast.net>
To: <christina.morrison@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Date: 9/2/2011 10:29 AM
Subject: Lower Afton Station Area Plan for Red Rock Corridor

Ms. Morrison

I would like to express some concerns with the siting of the Lower Afton Station for the Red Rock Corridor.

First, I am concerned about the impact a station will have on traffic flow on Lower Afton Road and the neighborhood use of feeder streets of Burlington Rd, Battle Creek Road and Pt. Douglas. Because Lower Afton Road is the stated main tributary for commuter use for the proposed station, increased traffic on it must be considered. Has traffic flow of nearby streets been addressed? How will the rush hour pressure of 275 cars trying to enter/exit the facility and their impact on the side streets be handled? Already at this time traffic flow east/west on Lower Afton causes issues for neighborhood access. Burlington Road and South Pt. Douglas Road residents have no alternatives.

I am also particularly concerned with the pressure of peripheral development that will naturally follow the construction of a park and ride facility. Although the plans do not currently show development - once a structure is built, the pressure to add more services and conveniences for the sake of the ridership will follow. Current zoning regulations may look strong...but too much pressure can void the current guidelines.

Siting the Red Rock Corridor station farther south perhaps at Bailey Road seems to make more sense in serving the targeted commuters.

Or, if in fact, the majority if not all, commuters using the station are travelling to Minneapolis, and are coming from "the east via Lower Afton Rd" why not site stations along the I-94 corridor where more property is available and open to peripheral development?

Although I am generally in support of park and ride commuter transit, I object to the siting of this enlarged station at Lower Afton Road. The local impact is not fully being considered (1/4 mile is too narrow an impact area) in light of traffic patterns and development pressure. I suggest that siting and focus of commuter transit to serve the South Maplewood and Woodbury users be directed toward the I-94 corridor. A small park and ride surface lot is sufficient for the St. Paul Highwood neighborhood users.

Sincerely,

Joanne Katz
497 Burlington Road
St. Paul, MN 55119
jomkatz@comcast.net

city of saint paul
planning commission resolution
file number _____
date _____

Recommendation of the Lower Afton Station Area Plan

WHEREAS, the Red Rock Corridor is a proposed 30-mile transitway, connecting the Twin Cities' southeastern suburbs to St. Paul and Minneapolis; and

WHEREAS, the corridor has regional, statewide, and national significance as a primary transportation route for automobile, truck, and rail travel, and the Southeast Quadrant of the Metro area is projected to grow 100,000 people in the next 20 years; and

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) Commuter Rail System Plan identified the Red Rock Corridor as the second priority for commuter rail following the currently operating Northstar Corridor; and

WHEREAS, the Corridor is one of eight corridors that have been identified by the Metropolitan Council as a potential transitway in the Twin Cities to be implemented by 2030; and

WHEREAS, the City has participated in planning through the Red Rock Corridor Commission, comprised of 11 communities within the corridor; and

WHEREAS, the Red Rock Corridor Commission completed an Alternatives Analysis Study in 2007, which resulted in commuter rail being determined to be the best long-term transit mode for the corridor, with short term strategies to build ridership with express bus service and additional park and rides; and

WHEREAS, the Red Rock Commission established a Community Advisory Committee to oversee this Station Area Planning; and

moved by _____
seconded by _____
in favor _____
against _____

Lower Afton Station Area Plan
Planning Commission Resolution
Page Two

WHEREAS, the Red Rock Corridor Commission completed an extensive 18-month public participation and community outreach process in the planning of four proposed transit station areas in the Red Rock Corridor, studying environmental impacts, transportation and access components, economic development potential, and cost estimates; and

WHEREAS, the Lower Afton Station Area Plan will support improvement of the station site and the expansion of bus service, growing transit ridership and promoting economic development throughout the corridor; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the draft plans on September 2, 2011, notice of which was sent to the Early Notification System list, and all property owners within the station area; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission considered the public testimony;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Planning Commission hereby recommends to the Mayor and City Council adoption of the Lower Afton Station Area Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission hereby directs the Planning Administrator to forward the station area plan to the Mayor and City Council for their review and adoption.